

## FRENCH INDO-CHINA

as its soldiers the most undesirable of its citizens and  
with them the state had perforce to be content,  
imposing upon the  
only responsibility for their good behaviour. In all such  
ways  
the commune slipped through the imperial hands and  
treated with the  
power as one state to another. If such a system was a  
salutary  
upon and the autocracy of an Oriental  
government, there  
was no redress for the masses within the commune itself.  
The Notables  
the laws and executed them, and there was no check  
upon their  
power. I» theory it was age and ability, but in practice  
solely property,  
qualified them for this office, so naturally they  
governed in  
the of their own class. These Notables, whose  
number varied  
the importance of their commune, were subdivided into  
the leaders  
directed general policy, and their subordinates who  
carried out  
decisions. Their meetings, which took place in the  
pagoda or  
house\* dealt with the cult of the village genii, the  
settle-  
of local disputes, the requisitioning of labour, the  
voting of the  
budget, and the recruiting of soldiers. Neither the  
number of  
nor the amounts they paid could vary because of  
harvest  
It is an Annamite axiom that a taxpayer never dies.  
The  
drawn up as a guarantee of property titles, as an aid  
to  
the taxes, and as a method of permitting the  
sovereign to  
the amount of land under cultivation in his empire.  
as the young eofnmime can never break away from the  
mother  
the central government, so the individual can never  
from the hold of his family and native village. Not only  
m he by the imperious ritualistic demands of  
the ancestral  
but he is also drawn by the security which the  
commune off ers to  
itt nourish, even the village paupers.

This feeling  
**of** to **and** shelter is, as a by-product, a  
 main cause  
 of and lack of altruism. The state  
 encourages  
 are returned to their commune after they have  
*m* bodies are sent back there  
 for burial  
 H Bxie m a more severe penalty  
 than death.  
 effort to<sup>1</sup> relncorporate the vagabond into  
 Ms • If disaster forced villagers to take  
 flight the  
 fcsiitei'tees, sent food to the dispossessed,  
**tftd** to **A\*** Special kws 'were made to  
 insure  
**tifte** harvest season, Qianging communes was  
 bet ^c^o^^'owMA^^a^mteinpomriy, was treason,  
**fe** social oblations into which  
 14